

**FORM E - BURIAL GROUND**

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
Massachusetts Archives Building  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Assessor's #  
**73/1 & 2a**

USGS Quad  
**Hanover**

Area

Form #  
**800**



**Town Hanson**

**Place**

**Address High Street**

**Historic Name Fern Hill Cemetery**

**Ownership unknown**

**Approximate Number of Stones**

**Earliest Death Date 1745**

**Latest Death Date active**

**Landscape Architect N/A**

**Condition good**

**Acreage about 17 acres**

**Setting dense residential**

**Recorded by Dempsey/Driemeyer**

**Organization Hanson Historical  
Commission**

**Date May 1996**

**Sketch Map Attached**



## BURYING GROUND FORM

### VISUAL/DESIGN ASSESSMENT (see continuation sheet)

The Fern Hill Cemetery is located on High Street near its intersection with Liberty Street in Hanson. Its present size and shape represent additions made over the intervening period, bringing it to a total of about seventeen acres, and consisting of two irregular rectangles, one facing onto High Street and the other positioned at an angle from the right rear or southeast corner of the front section. The front line of the parcel is marked by a low capped stone wall, with two outer vehicular entries and an impressive central granite gate. The portion of the yard closest to High Street is comparatively level, rising to the south and the east. In addition to the roads from the outer entries, the central one branches to the right and left; a perpendicular roadway runs across the top of the flat section before the rear ridge and connects to the new road system of the rear rectangle. Gravel walks from front to rear of the central front section of the yard. The rear sections of the cemetery are marked by dry laid stone walls and overlook Wampatuck Pond, a lovely setting for the attractive yard. The grounds are grassy lawn with scattered shade trees

### HISTORIC NARRATIVE

The Fern Hill Cemetery has been Hanson's primary burying ground since the area was settled by English colonists in the 18th century. The first burials date to the area's designation as West Parish, Pembroke, when the Thomas family owned the land and that family and the Cushing family began to bury family members on the high ridges overlooking Wampatuck Pond. The earliest stone memorializes a child of the Cushing family who died in 1745. In 1804, Nathaniel Thomas sold a two-acre parcel surrounding these graves to the parish for a burying ground. The first hearse house was located near the front of that original yard in 1811. In 1847, the Fern Hill Cemetery Corporation was established, to expand and manage the yard. A lot of over four acres was purchased joining the old yard to the High Street frontage. The old road to the burying ground was closed and a new one through the new front portion was constructed. The hearse house was moved in 1848 and a gate was installed three years later. In 1899 the Hanson Improvement Society proposed the construction of the new and ambitious granite gate. A stone monument to Hanson's participants in the Civil War was constructed here in 1905 but moved to the lawn of Town Hall in 1936. The cemetery was expanded with five gifts of land: an acre on High Street to the south in 1860, over two acres to the east of that land in 1879, over an acre further to the east in 1905, nearly an acre on the north side on High Street in 1912, and the large rear rectangle of over six acres in 1963.

### REFERENCES

Darsch, "History of Fern Hill Cemetery," 1977.  
"History of Hanson," 1962.

Recommended for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. See NR Criteria Statement attached.

## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community      Property Address  
**Hanson**      **High Street**

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 Boston MA 02125

Form # *800*

Area

## VISUAL/DESIGN ASSESSMENT, continued.

Constructed with funds from the Hanson Improvement Society, the central granite arch is composed of two high piers supporting an arch marked 1750 and 1900 on each edge and "Fern Hill Cemetery" across the center; the significance of the first date is unknown. The piers are constructed of rough-faced granite blocks topped by carved moldings and urns, and a globe on a pedestal marks the apex of the arch.

The oldest section of the yard is the highest section in the rear, where large early stones run along the ridge there; both slate and marble stones are located there. On the flat front section, both 19th century granite and marble stones and modern granite stones, most comparatively small, but taller obelisque style monuments as well. On the newer portions of the yard, multiple graves share single upright stones with flat markers for individuals. Two small buildings are located in the yard. A small garage and shop, gable-roofed with vinyl siding and sitting on a concrete foundation, is located in front of the rear ridge. The fieldstone tomb is located below the ridge and set into it further to the south, with a central metal door and a broad and low gable roof ornamented by five triangular stones set at regular intervals with their apexes up.



**INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET**

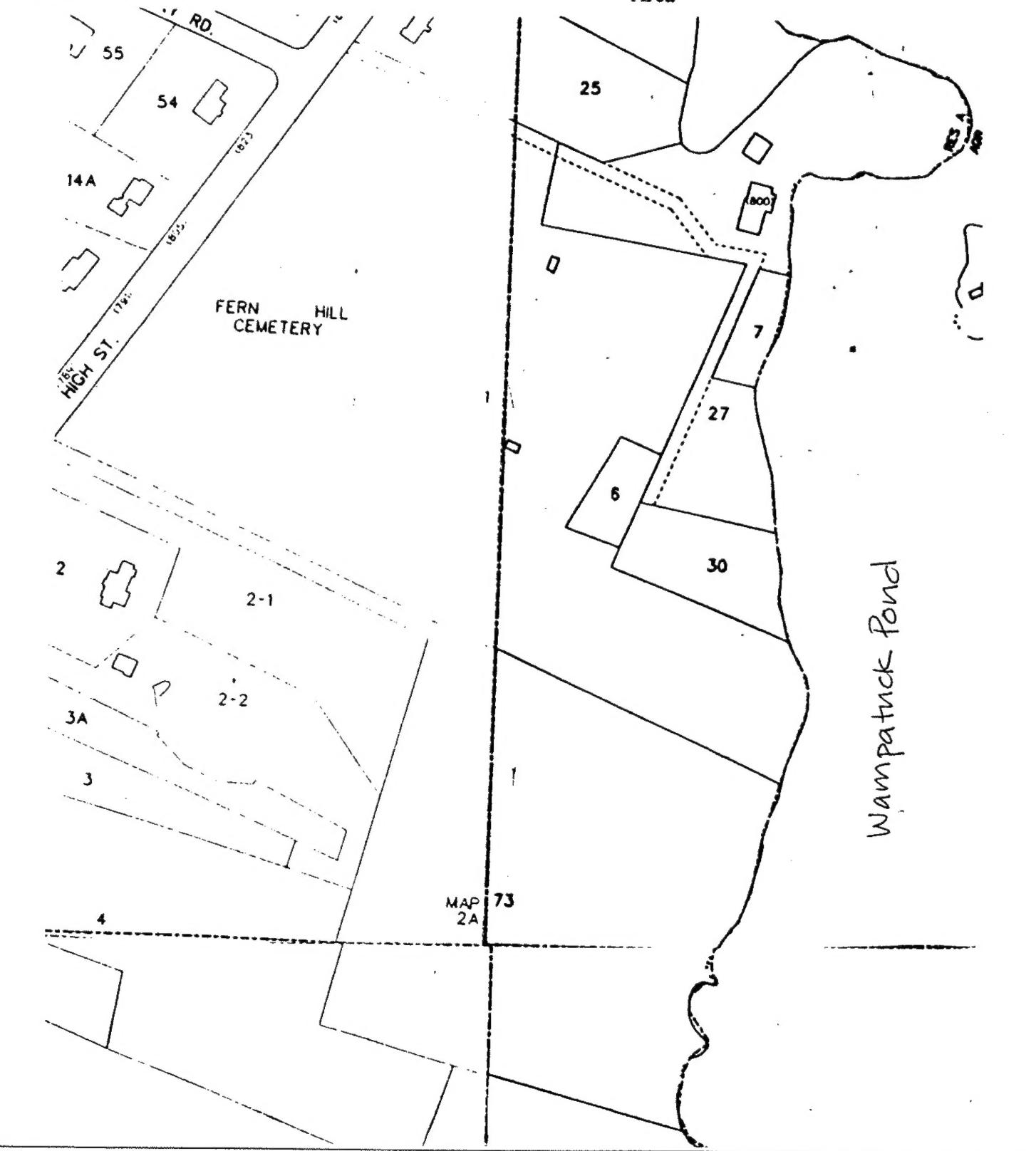
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## Community Hanson

Property Address  
**High Street**

Form # 8000

### Area



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Community  
**Hanson**

Area

Property Address

Form # *800*

### National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form



Check all that apply:

Individually eligible.  
 Contributing to a potential district.

Eligible only in a historic district.  
 Potential historic district.

Criteria:  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Statement of Significance by **Dempsey/Driemeyer**.

The Fern Hill Cemetery is significant as the primary burying ground of the town of Hanson. In this burying ground, many of the primary tomb and cemetery types can be found,, in a number of configurations related to changes in burying ground design. The Fern Hill Cemetery meets criteria A and C at the local level and retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.